

This special threat advisory is intended to provide situational awareness of an alleged incident that occurred on 17 February 2022 in British Columbia, and how it is being discussed amongst various ideologically motivated networks. (Information current as of 24 February 2022, 0700hrs). The IMCIT continues to maintain visibility on emerging threats and will provide updates as required.

SPECIAL THREAT ADVISORY

COASTAL GASLINK PIPELINE (CGL) OPPOSITION AT MORICE RIVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

KEY POINTS

- A reported violent confrontation in Morice River, British Columbia is being investigated. No linkages have currently been identified to the active protests against the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline (CGL) in the area.
- Some anarchist social media accounts and blogs have praised the direct action, indicating a level of support for activities of violence and sabotage within ideologically motivated networks.
- Polarizing narratives about the CGL incident have been observed within Freedom Convoy 2022 networks. There is a perception among convoy supporters that the police response against protesters in Ottawa is unwarranted in contrast to the perceived lack of police attention to the incident of violence perpetrated at the CGL site.

BACKGROUND

On 17 February 2022, a violent confrontation occurred along the Morice River Forest Service Road¹ between individuals armed with axes, the employees of Coastal Gaslink Pipeline (CGL) and police officers. The following details were provided in the E Division media release about the incident²:

- Initial reports allege that security guards were attacked and their vehicle windows were smashed.
- Areas along the road were blocked with downed trees, tar covered stumps, wire, boards with spikes in them and a school bus.
- Fires were lit throughout the debris. Sticks lit on fire and smoke bombs were thrown at police, resulting in one officer sustaining injuries.
- Extensive damage to equipment, buildings and fencing was identified at the drill pad site.

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According to a statement issued by CGL on 17 February 2022³, hydraulic and fuel lines were cut causing dangerous leaks and potential environmental damage.⁴ News media has reported that the equipment and property damage is estimated to be in the millions.⁵

The screenshots below are from the CGL statement.



Recent news reporting indicates that there are currently no suspects and, thus far, there have been no identified links to the active protest in the area.⁶ As of 21 February 2022, no claim of responsibility has been identified.

On 22 February, the RCMP released video footage of the alleged attack which depicted people armed with axes.⁷ The CGL website has also posted still footage of the reported attack, as pictured below.⁸



RELATED ONLINE NARRATIVES

Various narratives about the incident are circulating via open source networks:

- Some assert that this was an inside job by CGL itself due to budgetary issues, or that the RCMP caused the damage in response to criticism over the “heavy-handed response to peaceful demonstrators on traditional Wet’suwet’en territory in November”.⁹
- A prominent individual associated to numerous anarchist publications posted about the incident saying it was, “a highly effective of sabotage [sic] carried out by Indigenous land defenders”.¹⁰
- A Hamilton, ON social media page, which has regularly organized Wet’suwet’en solidarity actions in the past, posted “CGL & the Canadian State have left Wet’suwet’en individuals and their allies no other options to resist the CGL pipeline than direct action, including sabotage.”¹¹
- A popular international anarchist collective posted a thread about the incident, which includes the narrative, “We whole-heartedly hope that the mystery of who carried out this action is never solved, and that it contributes to the broader goal of blocking pipeline construction and convincing CGL's investors to pull out from the project. #AllOutForWedzinKwa”.¹²
- Popular social media accounts associated with initiating past Wet’suwet’en nation-wide solidarity actions posted a statement by the Office of the Wet’suwet’en saying that they did not have enough information to make any comments regarding the situation and that they do not support violence.¹³ The same pages reposted content from a self-described anarchist account, however, which directed people to “Don’t talk to the cops”, captioned with the comment “This escalation of tactics is a logical step in the buildup of 4 years of struggle. Sometimes warriors need to do warrior shit.”¹⁴ It is likely that this post is in response to the RCMP conducting interviews of people in the area surrounding the crime scene.¹⁵

It is also important to note that, in the day following news of the CGL confrontation, Freedom Convoy 2022 networks were posting about the incident and questioning why such a significant police response was directed towards the events in Ottawa, which they perceived had been peaceful, in contrast to a perceived lack of police response to the incident of violence perpetrated at the CGL site.

RELATED COASTAL GASLINK PROTESTS

Individuals in opposition of the CGL pipeline continue to target Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) locations. Earlier in February of 2022, an anonymous submission to an anarchist blog claimed responsibility for smashing windows, gluing locks and card readers, and spray painting profanity on unnamed RBC locations in Montreal.¹⁶ The communication indicated that the actions responded to a call by Wet’suwet’en hereditary chiefs to “#ShutdownCanada in response to the invasion of their territory, the Yintah, by the RCMP for the third consecutive year.”¹⁷

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Additionally, “Glue yourself to an RBC” is still a trending social media campaign in networks with environmental grievances. The tactic involves individuals gluing or chaining themselves to a RBC location to demand the bank stop all new investment in fossil fuels, completely divest from the CGL pipeline and cease all involvement in fossil fuels by 2023.¹⁸ No violence associated to this campaign has been identified via open source messaging.

ASSESSMENT

The IMCIT assesses that, although solidarity protests across Canada have slowed, the most recent incident of escalated targeted violence is concerning and, regardless of the investigative outcome, the fact that some anarchist social media accounts and blogs have praised the direct action, indicates a level of support for activities of violence and sabotage within ideologically motivated networks. At this time, however, no further actions of a violent nature have been identified nationally.

The IMCIT is liaising with law enforcement partners to maintain visibility on events related to the CGL active protests and will provide updates as required.

Issued by: Ideologically Motivated Criminal Intelligence Team (IMCIT)

Approved by: Director, Directorate of Strategic Intelligence, Federal Policing National Intelligence

¹ <https://bc-cb.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=2130&languageId=1&contentId=73532>

² Ibid.

³ <https://www.coastalgaslink.com/whats-new/news-stories/2022/2022-02-17workers-shaken-after-violent-attack-at-morice-river-drill-site/>

⁴ <https://www.coastalgaslink.com/whats-new/news-stories/2022/2022-02-17workers-shaken-after-violent-attack-at-morice-river-drill-site/>

⁵ <https://globalnews.ca/news/8636075/coastal-gaslink-attack-update-criminal/>

⁶ <https://globalnews.ca/news/8633179/no-suspects-yet-in-violent-confrontation-at-b-c-gas-pipeline-site-rcmp/>

⁷ <https://bc-cb.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=2130&languageId=1&contentId=73579>

⁸ <https://www.coastalgaslink.com/whats-new/news-stories/2022/2022-02-17workers-shaken-after-violent-attack-at-morice-river-drill-site/>

⁹ <https://www.straight.com/news/rcmp-history-of-smear-campaigns-warrants-skepticism-about-violent-confrontation-with-coastal>

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/zig.zag.921025/posts/10223537668203366>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/905WetsuwetenSolidarity/posts/5536645886363435>

¹² <https://twitter.com/submedia/status/1495178500810186758>

¹³ https://www.instagram.com/p/CaT2_DwLlux/

¹⁴ <https://www.instagram.com/p/CaWM4o2LWfs/>

¹⁵ <https://www.princegeorgepost.com/news/local-news/coastal-gaslink-attack-rcmp-has-good-idea-who-one-to-two-suspects-are>

¹⁶ <https://mtlcounterinfo.org/new-disruptive-action-in-solidarity-with-the-wetsuweten-targeting-royal-bank-of-canada-branches-again/>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ <https://www.instagram.com/glueyourselftoanrbc/>